



High Plains Regional Education Cooperative

R. Stephen Aguirre, Executive Director

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August 14, 2015

Chairman Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC, 20554

In the Matter of: Nomination for Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors,

CC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

On behalf of the undersigned national organizations representing the nation's public and private schools and America's libraries, we write today to urge you to reappoint Dr. Brian L. Talbott to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) Board of Directors as the representative for schools and libraries that are eligible to receive discounts. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit this nomination.

Dr. Talbott currently serves as Chairman of the USAC Board, represents schools on the Board's Schools and Libraries Committee, serves on the Audit and Executive Committees and as an observer on the High Cost/Low Income, Rural Health Care and Executive Compensation Committees. We continue to feel that he is a tremendous asset to the Board and to the entire universal service program. He has represented the needs of our communities before the board with consistency and integrity.

As the former executive director —and current executive director emeritus —of the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA), Dr. Talbott brings a wealth of information about the technology needs of both public and private schools and libraries to this position. The members of AESA work in collaboration with local school districts, private and parochial schools, public and school libraries, state departments of education and other educational entities to ensure all children are successful learners, and have the necessary and proper access to technology to enhance their learning. Educational service agencies play different roles related to the Schools and Libraries Program in different states; in some states they are beneficiaries of the program, in others they serve as consultants to applicants, and in some they even act as service providers. This unique membership continues to provide Dr. Talbott with important insights into the operation of the program from a number of different perspectives.

Prior to joining AESA, Dr. Talbott served as superintendent of Educational Service District 101 where he was responsible for the operation of all programs, providing cooperative services to 59 public school districts and 54 private schools in eastern Washington State. As the agency's chief executive, he served as general manager of the STEP/Star Network, one of the nation's oldest and largest distance learning networks.

Dr. Talbott has also served on the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) Board and as past Vice-Chair of the Reading is Fundamental (RIFNet) Board, as well as a number of boards in his home state of Washington. In these roles, he has provided valuable leadership to the education community on a variety of critical education and technology issues.

Collectively, our groups represent the nation's leading education and library associations and strongly support the reappointment of Dr. Talbott to the Universal Service Administrative Company Board of Directors. We have been working with the Commission to improve the E-rate program since its inception. We believe that Dr. Talbott's broad understanding of education and technology, diligence, hard work, and vision have greatly enriched the work performed by USAC in the past, and will continue to do so into the future. His continued service on the USAC Board will also provide continuity and leadership for the Corporation, in addition to his substantial knowledge and experience leading his fellow board members. For these reasons, we respectfully request your approval of Dr. Talbott's re-nomination to the USAC Board of directors, representing schools that are eligible to receive discounts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Stephen Aguirre", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. Stephen Aguirre
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